

I think of those who lost their lives to remove a thug and a drug dealer from Panama. I think of those who lost their lives in Europe and Kosovo, in that region of the world, to restore stability. And I think how great these American heroes are that not only allow us to live in freedom, with liberty and a system of justice, but to let others have that potential across the globe.

Sometimes it succeeds and sometimes it does not, but they have given their full measure and their families have given their loved ones so that others may have even the potential of enjoying the freedoms that we Americans take for granted.

So tonight we have honored three American heroes, and, finally tonight I ask the House to pass H.R. 5147 and name a post office building in honor of Evan Asa Ashcraft.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of a young man, Evan Asa Ashcraft, whose life was cut short serving our nation in Iraq. H.R. 5147, which has been cosponsored by the entire California delegation, would name the post office located at 23055 Sherman Way in West Hills, California the "Evan Asa Ashcraft Post Office."

Evan Ashcraft was smart, talented, and energetic. He represented the very best of American values. From an early age, he excelled in school, first at Welby Way Gifted Magnet School in West Hills, then at Nobel Middle School Magnet in Northridge and El Camino Real High School in Woodland Hills.

Evan was devoted to his family—his wife, Ashley, his mother, Jane, his father, Asa, his younger brother, Drew, his stepmother, Beverly, and his two step sisters, Felicia and Theresa.

By all accounts, Evan was extremely dedicated. Anything he put his mind to, he accomplished in grand fashion, and his service in the military was no exception. He enlisted in the Army at the age of 20, and it did not take long for his superior officers to recognize that he was a gifted soldier. Midway through his basic training, Evan was made a team leader.

Evan enjoyed his time with the 101st Airborne division. As was often the case in his life, however, he sought a greater challenge and volunteered for duty with the elite Army Rangers. Unfortunately, he was injured during training and returned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry of the 101st.

On March 1, 2003, Evan was deployed to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He saw action quickly, participating in the liberation of Baghdad International Airport and the mission that found two of Saddam Hussein's sons, Uday and Usay.

A month later, the Humvee Evan was riding in hit a land mine and came under enemy fire. Both soldiers accompanying Evan were badly wounded and in desperate need of medical attention. Showing no regard for his own safety, Evan risked his life to pull the two men to safety. According to others on hand that day, were it not for Evan's quick and decisive action, both men would have died.

One of the men Evan saved that day, Sergeant Arcebuze, said, "Evan was always there for his men. He was a natural born leader."

Like so many soldiers in Iraq, Evan had big dreams for his life after the war. He planned

to move back to California with his wife, Ashley, start a family, and join the Los Angeles police force. His reason for doing so was simple according to Ashley: "He was a person who really wanted to help other people, to protect them."

Evan was not able to realize his dreams. He was killed with two other soldiers on July 24, 2003, when his Humvee was attacked during a reconnaissance mission near Mosul.

To the people who knew him, Evan represented hope for America's future. After he died, his mother wrote, "This loss is not just mine, it's the world's loss . . . Evan will always be with us in spirit. He still lives, and will continue to live, in all of us." Evan was awarded the Bronze Star for bravery, and was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and the rank of Sergeant.

By naming a post office in Evan's honor in his hometown of West Hills, his community and a grateful nation will always be reminded of the life, the contributions, and the ultimate sacrifice of this extraordinary young man.

I urge unanimous support for H.R. 5147.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5147.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following privileged message from the Senate:

SEPTEMBER 14, 2004.

Ordered, That the Secretary be directed to request the return to the Senate (S. 2261) entitled "An Act to expand certain preferential trade treatment for Haiti.", in compliance with a request of the Senate for the return thereof.

Attest:

EMILY J. REYNOLDS,
Secretary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the request of the Senate is agreed to, and S. 2261 will be returned to the Senate.

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize Members for special order speeches without prejudice to the resumption of legislative business.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Two weeks ago, this House stood idly as the federal ban on assault weapons expired. The House ignored two-thirds of the public, over half of gun-owners, and nearly every law enforcement organization in America in favor of the NRA's leadership's extreme agenda against common sense.

Fortunately, I live in a state that enforces its own assault weapons ban. While the state ban is not as effective a tool as the federal ban was to keep personal weapons of mass destruction out of the hand of criminals and terrorists, it does make it more difficult for them to acquire assault weapons.

However, this week the House leadership, which pretends to be a friend of the sovereignty of state and local governments, will allow a vote on a bill keeping popularly elected officials from banning assault weapons and other guns from their jurisdictions.

This week the House will vote on legislation introduced by a member from Indiana ending the ban on firearms in the District of Columbia. The popularly elected Mayor, City Council, and U.S. Delegate to the House all oppose ending the ban. Federal courts have upheld the constitutionality of the DC ban. In fact, the only support for ending the DC gun ban comes from politicians that do not represent the District.

The District will go from having the toughest gun laws in America, to becoming the subject of a twisted social experiment brought to us by the NRA. Those listed on terrorist watch lists prohibited from boarding planes at Reagan National Airport will be able to purchase a handgun, AK-47, or TEC-9 only blocks away from the White House or Capitol Building. Just today, I received a letter from the House Sergeant at Arms detailing the new security recommendations put in place to keep our offices safe. Passage of this legislation cannot be viewed as anything other than counterproductive to these efforts.

Proponents of this legislation say the DC ban has not been effective, citing the District's crime rates, which are not unlike many other large urban communities in the United States. However, the homicide rate in the District is at an all time low, thanks to the Metropolitan Police Department's efforts to get guns off the streets. The DC ban has been a valuable tool in these efforts, but once again House leadership refuses to listen to those most effected by the ban's end.

Granted, the DC gun ban's effectiveness has been hampered by the District's proximity to gun dealers in Virginia and Maryland, but that is no excuse to make it easier for criminals and terrorists to purchase guns in DC.

And while the House leadership's grasp of basic economic principles has been questionable throughout the 108th Congress, one must acknowledge that once the supply of guns is increased, the prices of these weapons will decrease.

Thanks to this legislation, gang members who could only afford to purchase one gun will most likely be able to get two thanks to increased supply and lower prices.

It is only a matter of time before the first crimes are committed with a gun purchased legally in our nation's capital. When that time occurs, the House Leadership must be prepared to explain to the victims of these crimes